



THE RARA RAG

Newsletter of The Rochester Amateur Radio Association, Inc.
Founded in 1931

VOL. 65

January 2013

NO. 5

Communicating with the ISS

By Gary Skuse, KA1NJL
Vice President, RaRa

Can you imagine spending six months preparing for a contact, holding a weeklong space camp for kids and guaranteeing that the only opportunity to talk with the ISS, which is traveling overhead at 17,000 mph will work? And doing this with the knowledge that you will not have a second chance if the first one fails? At the



January RARA meeting, scheduled for Friday January 4th at 7:00pm, Jim Stefano, W2COP, will tell us about the challenges and rewards associated with communicating with the International Space Station. On more than one occasion Jim has introduced local young people to the thrills working extreme DX on the space station. While they are all familiar with the ease of communicating via cell phone, they were impressed by our ability as amateurs to talk to someone

actually orbiting the earth. His most recent adventure with the ISS involved young girls interested in pursuing careers in engineering and you can learn more about it in an article and video which appeared in the *Henrietta Post* [here](#).

The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program is a cooperative project jointly supported by NASA, the ARRL, AMSAT and other space agencies. It is designed to enable astronauts and cosmonauts aboard the ISS to talk with classrooms and communities around the world via amateur radio. In doing so it not only promotes interest in amateur radio, the space program, science and engineering but it demonstrates that astronauts and cosmonauts are people too.

The challenges of successfully communicating with the ISS and sharing that experience with the community are formidable. First, it must be visible overhead because communications are line-of-sight (despite not being able to reliably "see" the ISS). Then that pass must occur during the daytime when school age children or other interested parties are available to participate. Of course this all must be accompanied by the appropriate radio equipment, antennas and expertise to make the contact. Jim has overcome these challenges more than once and he will share his experiences with us at the January meeting. Please join us for this interesting presentation from someone with an uncommon perspective.



This month in the RaRa RAG...

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RARA Meeting:
January 4th, 7PM

Henrietta FD#1
3129 E. Henrietta Rd.



The Prez Sez

By Bill Marinucci, WB2GHC
President, RaRa

Greetings and Salutations! Let me begin by extending my best wishes to you and yours for a happy, prosperous, and healthy New Year! This past year seemed to fly by at lightning speed for me, and I am willing to bet that most of you have the same feeling as well. I have made my New Year resolutions like I do every year, things like shedding a few pounds, exercising more, and to spend more time in the ham shack. Well, one out of three will be easier to accomplish than the other two. I'll let you guess which one I am talking about.

The next RaRa activity is our annual Winterfest, which is being held on February 23, 2013. There will be a special events station in operation on scene. You may also bring any equipment that you would like to set up and get on the air with. But most importantly, there will be awesome food to consume. Like last year, there will be a cooking contest, so bring your best dish (and dessert) to enjoy! We are going to have the RaRa monthly meetings extended to include June, July, and August this year, something new, something different. Plans are being made to deviate from our usual meeting format for these summertime meetings. Stay tuned for more details.

I am very encouraged by the growing number of folks getting their ham licenses and joining our ranks, especially the younger ones. The younger hams are the future of ham radio, and who knows what technologies are ahead for them. I am also glad to see that for many, ham radio is a family thing... husband and wife, sons and daughters, etc. are getting their licenses together. This is awesome.

This was the first occasion to take advantage of that great RaRa deal that is extended to those who join RaRa, take our Technician License class, and pass their test getting their "ticket." They have the opportunity to purchase a dual band handheld, preprogrammed with local repeaters, for a mere \$25.00. This provides a pretty good incentive for one to earn his or her first license and then be able to get on the air almost immediately at an affordable price. Almost all of this class that has just finished and who passed the test took advantage of this deal. It's a win-win for all.

Enjoy the month, be safe, and get on the air... 73!

Calendar of Events

- Jan 4** **RaRa General Meeting**
7:00 PM - Henrietta FD #1
3129 E. Henrietta Rd
- Jan 9** **RaRa Board of Directors**
5:30 PM, RIT Engineering
Hall, Room 2110
- Jan 19** **RaRa VE Testing** sessions
10:00 AM, RIT Gleason
Hall, Room 3139

Happy
New Year
2013



Rag-Chew

Editor's Thoughts & Comments
By Kevin Carey, WB2QMY
Editor@RochesterHam.org

Happy New Year to all! We have a full lineup of articles for you this month, and I hope to have several new items coming along for 2013. One of these is an occasional series on the use of test equipment in the ham shack by a local ham very knowledgeable in this area. Please send along your ideas for this, and other articles you'd like to see. While the primary goal of the newsletter is to keep you up to date on club happenings, I also believe the *Rag* should be something that enhances your radio hobby, and carries articles relevant to your operating interests. We don't aspire to be a "magazine"—there are other options for that—but we do want to be one of the leading club newsletters with a focus on the *fun* of ham radio, and in increasing the value of your membership in RARA.

Speaking of the *Rag*, I'd like to take a moment to thank our regular and feature contributors who provide the content for our newsletter each month. Without them, there would be no news to report! I know exactly how it feels staring at a blank computer screen when you need to write something, and these folks manage to pull it together each month for you, the members of RARA. In addition, our Layout Editor, Frank Schramm (WB2PYD) keeps the visual appearance of your *Rag* looking fresh. My main focus is on the *words* you read in the newsletter, but it is Frank who does the visual design and also distributes each issue. Our teamwork in ham radio goes back to Jr. High School (I won't say how far back that was), but I'm delighted to be working with Frank on this latest endeavor. Finally, I'd like to thank our advertisers, who provide important support to the club on an ongoing basis which helps with many programs, including educational initiatives. Be sure to consider them when you have a need they can assist with.

I wanted to pass along one item that was received just before press time from our friends at the Lockport Amateur Radio Association. LARA will hold its Winter Hamfest on Saturday, January 26th from 8AM until Noon at the South Lockport Fire Co., 5666 South Transit Rd., Lockport, NY. Mark your calendar now for this 52nd annual event, which is one of the longest running in the area. Talk-in will be on the W2RUI repeater, 146.22/82 MHz. For more info, visit the LARA website at <http://lara.hamgate.net/> or contact Gary Smith by e-mail at G8smith@juno.com (tel. 716-433-3132).

I'll leave you with an interesting web link sent to me by Dick Goslee, KG2I. I've seen many metallic objects used for an antenna, but a string of Christmas lights was a first for me. Check out the "Christmas Light QSO" on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGciGGu50Qk>.

73 & best DX!



***The RaRa Art Department –
Laying out the Rag.***

RARA Winterfest 2013

By Gary Skuse, KA1NJL

This year we are again planning a winter picnic and operating event at Ellison Park. As we grow and expand the fun we have moved the RARA Winterfest to a larger lodge that has a separate area that will facilitate operating while everyone else is eating and enjoying each other's company. This year we are going to be in the Pavilion Lodge, located [here](#), shown near the top center of the map. Of course the Pavilion is fully enclosed and heated so the weather will not chill our fun.

Just like last year we plan to have several radios and monitoring stations set up. In fact, if you would like to bring your own station please let me know. Together we can work out the details regarding antennas, table space and whatever else you may need to share your favorite operation modes with the other attendees.

Again, just like last year, we will have a crockpot cook-off. I made a joke last year when I invited someone to try their hand at crockpot pizza and I was pleasantly surprised when not only did we get a crockpot pizza but it was voted everyone's favorite creation. Everyone is invited to bring their favorite crockpot concoction to share. If it can be made in a crockpot you are welcome to bring it and I am sure everyone will enjoy it. We will be awarding prizes of RARA membership points to the top three entrants. The first place winner will receive 50 points, second place will get 30 points and the third place winner will receive 10 points. These points can be redeemed when you renew your RARA membership, they can be applied toward fashionable and highly coveted RARA apparel or who knows what other opportunities may arise in the coming years?

While having the opportunity to operate, eating delectable crockpot creations and swapping stories with your fellow amateur radio operators ought to be enough fun for one day, there is more. We are again inviting everyone to bring a dessert to share. In fact we will also be judging desserts and awarding 25 RARA membership points for the best one. We encourage you to put on your chefs' hats, or at least a hair net, and amaze and delight us with your sweet culinary creations. Despite the competition, there is no entry fee for these cook-offs so each of us is a winner because we get to enjoy the wonderful food your fellow members bring to share.

This year the winterfest will be held on Saturday **February 23rd** so mark your calendars. We plan to be there around 10am to set up radios and antennas and anyone is welcome to help if you want. We encourage everyone to plan to get there around 11:30am when the eating and operating will be in full swing.

If you plan to bring something delectable to share please let me know by e-mail, at ka1nj1@arrl.net, or by phone at 585-223-1511 so we can keep track of the wonderful food we can look forward to. RARA will provide non-alcoholic beverages and together we will all provide the fun.

Photos from prior Winterfests:

[Gallery 1](#)

[Gallery 2](#)

[Gallery 3 \(Thank you Len Gessin\)](#)



VE News

By Ken Hall, W2KRH
VE Coordinator

We had 12 candidates in November, eight Technician and four General. This included two Husband/Wife pairs. I would like to thank Gary Skuse, KA1NJL who sat in for me as the group leader. Our next session will be on January 19th at RIT. See you there.

New licensees:

Michael Bock, KD2DBU (Technician)
Dennis Duster, KD2DBV (Technician)
Frank Fatigate, KD2DBW (Technician)
Donald Jessmer, KD2DBX (Technician)
Jeanette Jessmer, KD2DBY (Technician)
Mark Mallis, KD2DBZ (Technician)
Marybeth Mallis, KD2DCA (Technician)
Paul Mulford, KD2DCB (Technician)
Jerome Glick, KB3ZMP (General)
Stephen Kurzdorfer, KD2BJE (General)
Edward Pendzik, KD2DCC (General)
James Sanchez, N2UJN (General)



Licensing Classes

By Sue Waterstraat KC2SUE
RARA Education Coordinator

Get your Ham license or upgrade to General in time for Field Day 2013! The Technician and General courses will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m., beginning February 5th. The location will be the James E. Gleason Building #9 at RIT. There will be 10 sessions and the classes will be completed in time for RARA's April 18th testing date. There is still room, but contact Sue Waterstraat at suewater@rochester.rr.com soon if you would like to register. If an unlicensed RARA member takes our licensing course and passes the Technician class exam they are eligible to purchase a dual band hand-held radio from RARA for \$25.00.

Class space is limited and reservations are highly recommended. Licensing courses are FREE to current members and only \$15.00 for non-members. Not a current RARA member? Membership is free for students and only \$8.00 for others without a ham license! Click here for details:

<http://www.rochesterham.org/Membership.htm>

For those interested in the Extra course, please stay tuned; we are trying to line up an instructor to hold a winter session and should have more information at the January RARA meeting.

Silent Key

David P. Hayden, K2TEH
December 7th, 2012

Meeting Prizes

By Jav KC2TCM & Sabrina WD2STK

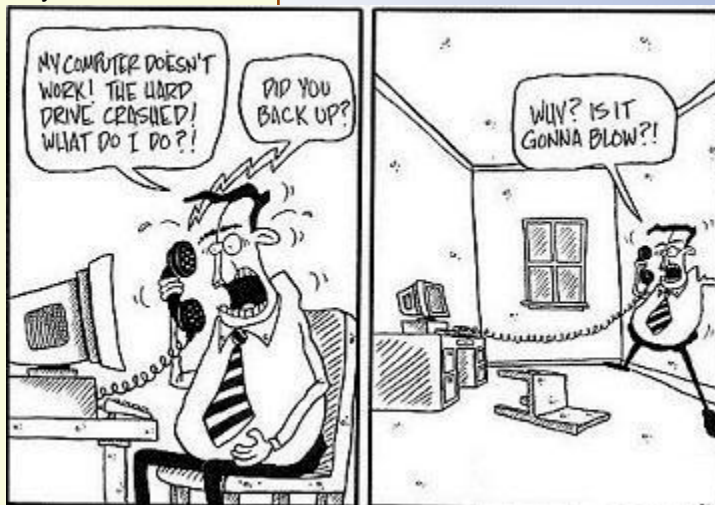


January's seven raffle items are going to be given away in pairs... that the winner picks! We have a nice Labtec desktop microphone, a 100-pack of QSL cards (Compliments of Universal Radio, Inc. www.universal-radio.com), an AA-powered cell phone charger, a Yaesu hat, Yaesu can koozie, and two radio books; Kevin Carey's *Listening to Longwave* and Joe Carr's *Receiving Antenna Handbook*. See you at the meeting!

Two Kinds of Computer Users...

By Bill Kasperkoski, WB2SXY

There are two kinds of computer users: those who have had a hard-disk crash, and those who are waiting for a hard-disk crash. So as a reminder, always back up your radio logbook and other important files at least every month, and of course, take a snapshot at the end of the year too. You may want to download your Log Book of the World and eQSL files, too, depending on how paranoid you are. In the event of – or maybe more precisely WHEN - your computer hard drive crashes, do a save on your LoTW Certificate info TODAY, especially the TQSL-Cert of your station info. (You are keeping track of the 3-year expiration of your LoTW certificate, right?) The only way to generate your LoTW TQSL without going through the entire process from step one is to go into TQSL-Cert and do a save; generate YOURCALL.p12 file, which is the method of moving your TQSL to another computer. Be sure to save the *.p12 file on a thumb-drive, CD or another computer. Make sure you write your LoTW and eQSL passwords in your PAPER Daytimer; you could have up to five: web logins, log signing, and the *.p12.



Speaking of the 3-year renewal, the TQSL-Cert renewal is pretty easy, just don't do it while you have a log file queued up to be processed in the system – ask me how I know this! (You will have an opportunity to reload that log with the new certificate.) Once your renewal is all set, you can delete the *.TQ5, *.TQ6 and *.TQ8 files, as they will have the old Cert info and are never again useable. See <http://www.arrl.org/renew-certificate> for details.

Scanning Report: True GMRS & FRS Range

By Jim Sutton, N2OPS

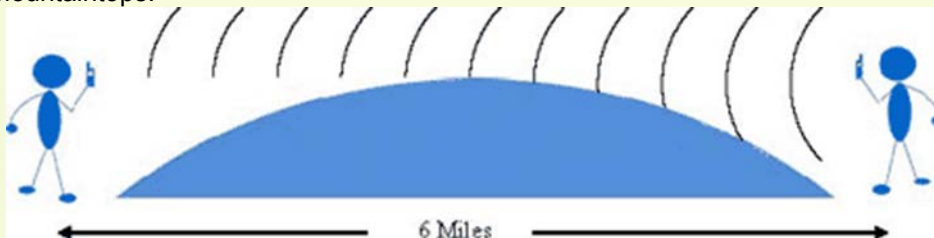
Some GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) and FRS (Family Radio Service) ads claim up to 40-mile range for their hand held radios. That's pretty impressive for ½ to 4 watt radios.

The ad at the right from a major retailer's website touts 40-mile range. Let's take a closer look at these claims to see just how true they are. We in the ham community already know the answer. Here are the realistic figures you can count on for these services:

Terrain	½ Watt FRS Family Radios	1 Watt UHF GMRS Radios	2 Watt UHF GMRS Radios	2 Watt VHF MURS Radios
Outside Clear Flat Terrain	1.5 to 2 miles	2 to 3 miles	3 to 4 miles	3 to 5 miles
Suburban Neighborhoods	1 to 1.5 miles	1 to 2 miles	1.5 to 2 miles	1.5 to 3 miles
Urban Areas	½ to 1 mile	½ to 1.5 miles	1 to 1.5 miles	1 to 1.5 miles
Inside Buildings or Malls	½ mile or 5 floors	½ to ¾ mile 15 floors	1 mile 20 floors	½ mile 10 Floors
Between Buildings or Houses	1/8 to ½ mile	½ to 1 mile	1/2 to 2 miles	1 to 3 miles
Woodlands, Moderate Vegetation	1 to 1.5 miles	1 to 2 miles	1.5 to 2 miles	2 to 3 miles
Woodlands, Thick Vegetation	½ to 1 mile	½ to 1.5 miles	1 to 1.5 miles	1.5 to 2 miles

These figures are averages based upon our tests and customer feedback. Your results will vary depending upon obstructions, elevation, terrain, vegetation and building construction.

The curvature of the earth allows for a maximum of 6 miles even in the best conditions. To achieve anything further the units would have to be between mountaintops.



Now as you shop for communications for your family you will know the true range to expect. Want to know more about the various radio services? Then come to the March 1st RARA meeting where I will present an in-depth program on GMRS, FRS, MURS, and other radio services.

Until next time, 73 to thee.

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I told you it wouldn't go THAT far!

RaRa Rags of the Past

By Ed Gable, K2MP
RaRa Historian

20 Years Ago, January, 1993

The topic for the first meeting of the new year was a favorite one, antennas. More specifically, the program focused on getting started with wire antennas, a practical, low cost antenna alternative. The speaker, Dick Witkowski, WB2TEQ, pulled upon his own experience from years of practice at his antenna test facility in Hilton, NY. The venue for the meeting was the new Henrietta Fire Hall location. RaRa's long time license testing specialists, George, AA2FO, and Barbara, AA2CX, reported that ten amateurs got new licenses, or upgraded, at the November testing session. Kay Craigie, WT3P, the Atlantic Division ARRL Director, announced that our own area VHF/UHF specialist, Dave Hallidy, KD5RO/2, of Pittsford, was named to the ARRL's Contest Advisory Committee. RaRa's Winter Fun Fest was announced for February 13th at Mendon Ponds Park. A short, but very well written article was penned by the Rochester VHF Group detailing how to get on and work the January VHF contest. From the Want Ads you could buy a Hammarlund HQ-180 from Len Gessin, WA2ZNC, for one-hundred dollars. Chuck Vorndran, WB2OZS, remained a long term commercial advertiser doing business as Vorndran Marine Canvas, Clinton Ave., Rochester.

40 Years Ago, January, 1973

Announcing the unusual program for the evening was even then an old timer and popular local amateur, Joe Marsey, W2EMX. Joe, along with Harvey Prace, WB2IUM, put on a Quiz Program not unlike the popular TV shows of the period. The show was complete with lighted flashing signs and two pairs of four nervous contestants drawn from the audience who tried to answer questions that came from the license manual. It was great fun. The 12th annual RaRa dinner-dance was announced by Cappy Capauldy, K2UXF, who told us of the February 10th event to be held at the Mill Restaurant in Honeoye Falls. After dinner brought "Fun with Dunn" by WHAM's local radio personality, Eddie Dunn, W2ECH. A front page photo showed a surprised Bruce Kelley W2ICE, surrounded by Prose Walker W4BW, Chairman of the FCC's Amateur Branch, and AWA guest Dr. Brittain of AT&T, co-inventor of the transistor, at the AWA conference in Washington DC. The surprise was Bruce Kelley being given the coveted international Houck award for historical preservation. (Note: 32 years later, in 2004, Bruce Kelley's protégée, Ed Gable K2MP, would receive the same award) Haven't paid your dues yet? Get with it says Joan Vogt, WA2YTK. RaRa President Ed Holdsworth, WA2EKR, announced the formation of a formal standing committee to act as liaison between RaRa and Civil Defense. The first committee consisted of Rich Koehn WB2SNA, Bill March WA2CER, Elmer Wagner WB2BNJ and from Civil Defense Marv McIntyre K2ZAA. At the same joint announcement, CD officials named Jim Collinsworth, WB2EDT, as Radio Officer. One of Jim's first duties was to plan the annual Simulated Emergency Test (SET) which was announced in this issue as planned for January 28th and included VHF/UHF FM and HF SSB nets. From the Want Ads you could buy a Swan 240 HF transceiver from Tim Magee WB2KAO. Glenwood Sales on Hague Street remained a long time advertiser.

RaRa LOGO Items



Don't feel left out- get your
RaRa logo items today!

<http://www.rochesterham.org/logo.htm>

News from our friends at other area clubs...

Monroe County ARES / RACES News

By Jim DiTucci, N2IXD

The Monroe County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, Inc. holds its meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month. Anyone interested, members and non-members, are welcome to attend. The next ARES Meeting will be held on: **Thursday, January 24, 2013, at 7:00 PM.**

Meetings are held at the **Greater Rochester Chapter of the American Red Cross HQ, 50 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607.** (Located behind the Rochester Auditorium Theatre, 885 Main St. E.)

ARES NET: Monroe County ARES/RACES meets on the air every Thursday of the month at 9:00 pm, on the 146.61 MHz (-) 110.9 Hz PL repeater. The only exception to that are nights when we hold our regular meeting, generally on the 4th Thursday of the month.

WEB: www.monroecountyemcomm.org

NBEMS: Want to learn about Narrow Band Emergency Messaging System (NBEMS)? It's the latest and easiest way to "Go Digital!" Bring your laptop computer and 2-M handheld transceiver. We will conduct an NBEMS clinic after every meeting through June 2013.

RRRA News

By Bob Shewell, N2HJD
RRRA President

I would like to thank those who were able to make the RRRA Christmas dinner. I was hoping for a larger turnout but enjoyed socializing with those that made it. Our January 18th meeting topic will be Software Defined Radios, and we hope you can join us at the usual meeting location, the Pittsford Town Hall, 11 Main St. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Our VP Max, N2MXD, has been busy moving and updating our club's web page. Check it out at rrra.cybermansoftware.com!

Editor's Note:

Free press is available for your club! We welcome brief updates and meeting notices from all area ham clubs. Just send your input to editor@rochesterham.org. When preparing your article, please remember to keep it short, and assume that readers know nothing about your club. The article should be focused toward non-members, and not your own current members... that's what your newsletter is for! We hope all area clubs will take advantage of this opportunity to interest new members in joining their ranks.

73, -Kevin



January VHF Contest (January 19-21)

By Ken Kent, KA2LIM

The following web page is a stand-alone announcement, since the ARRL announcement was buried inside a bunch of other news items:

www.qsl.net/n2sln/newcategories.html

The ARRL Contest Update for November 21, 2012

NEWS, PRESS RELEASES, AND GENERAL INTEREST

We've just gotten used to the idea of Low Power categories for Unlimited and Multioperator entries in ARRL HF contests - how about for VHF+ contests? Yes, two new categories have been added there, too, beginning with the [ARRL January VHF Contest](#). First is the **3-Band** category in which participants are limited to 100 W or less on 6 and 2 meters, and 50 W or less on 70 c m. This category is just right for those sporting an "all-band, all-mode" rig! To encourage new hams to give VHF+ contests a try without having to buy new equipment, the **FM Only** category allows operation with 100 W or less on the 6 m eter, 2 m eter, 1-1/4 meter, and 70 c m bands. Experienced VHF+ testers will want to include FM capability to work these new stations. Remember to upgrade your logging software and operating aids to add these new categories well in advance of the January contest date.



1. Date and Contest Period: The date will be announced annually by the ARRL but will generally be the third or fourth weekend in January. The contest begins at 1900 UTC Saturday, ends at 0359 UTC Monday (January 19-21, 2013).

2. Entry Categories:

- 3.1. Single Operator (spotting assistance is NOT permitted)
 - 3.1.1. High Power (1500 W PEP or maximum power allowed by your Amateur license, whichever is less)
 - 3.1.2. Low Power (200 W PEP on 50/144 MHz; 100 W PEP on 222/432 MHz; 50 W PEP on 902 MHz and higher)
 - 3.1.3 Portable (10 W PEP or less, portable power source, portable antennas, cannot set up at a permanent station location)
 - 3.1.4. 3-Band (6m, 2m and 432 MHz only; 100 W or less on 6m/2m, 50 W or less on 432 MHz.)
 - 3.1.5. FM Only (6m-446 MHz, 100 W or less on all bands)

The Amateur's Code

Originally written by Paul M. Segal, W9EEA (1928)

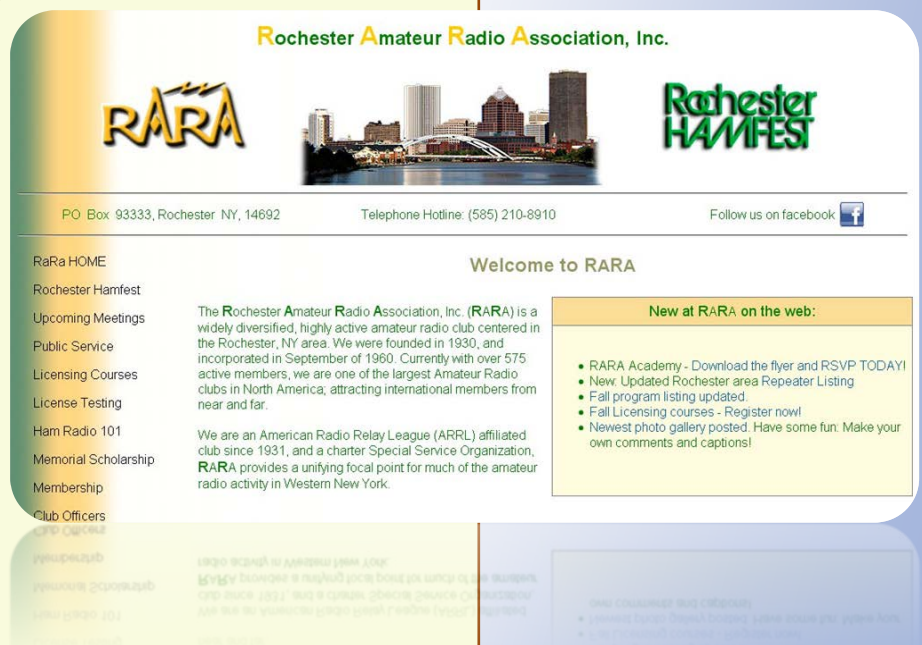
The Radio Amateur is:

CONSIDERATE	Never knowingly operating in such a way as to lessen the pleasure of others.
LOYAL	Offering loyalty, encouragement and support to other amateurs, local clubs and the American Radio Relay League, through which Amateur Radio in the United States is represented nationally and internationally.
PROGRESSIVE	With knowledge abreast of science, a well built and efficient station and operation beyond reproach.
FRIENDLY	With slow and patient operation when requested, friendly advice and counsel to the beginner, kindly assistance, co-operation and consideration for the interests of others. These are the hallmarks of the amateur spirit.
BALANCED	Radio is an avocation, never interfering with duties owed to family, job, school or community.
PATRIOTIC	With station and skill always ready for service to country and community

Visit the RARA Website!

Did you know that your club's website (www.rochesterham.org) offers these features and more?

- ✓ Photos of meetings & events (you might be in there!)
- ✓ Info on upcoming meetings/programs
- ✓ Rochester Hamfest information!
- ✓ Online membership & renewal
- ✓ Track and redeem your Reward points
- ✓ Public service info & sign-up
- ✓ VE testing info
- ✓ Back issues of the *Rag* in PDF
- ✓ Officer contact info
- ✓ List of past presidents (how many do you remember?)
- ✓ Online membership directory
- ✓ Order RARA logo products (hats, shirts, and mugs)
- ✓ Useful Internet links
- ✓ Ham Radio 101—tons of tutorial info, plus net & repeater listings



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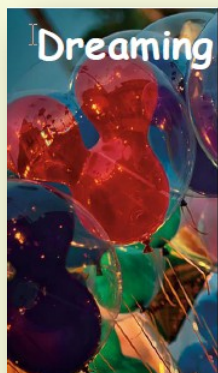
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RaRa meets on the first Friday of each month
from September through May at 7pm. come join
us at:

Henrietta Fire Company No.1
3129 East Henrietta Rd.
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